

Prof. Cresson described some remarkable electrical phenomena, observed by him during the summer, showing clearly the dispersive mood of lightning.

In one instance, the lightning, after descending along the exterior of a maple tree, without damage to the tree, passed from the tree to a line of rails in an adjacent post-and-rail fence, where it parted in two opposite directions, to the distance of nearly eighty feet in each direction, demolishing the fence by bursting open the posts and splintering the rails: fragments of the rails being thrown to the distance of sixty feet or more.

In the other case, the lightning was seen to strike a cherry tree, standing about fifty feet from a line of telegraph wires, two in number, to which, from the tree, it leaped, and was then seen to pass in opposite directions along the wires. In one direction (eastward) it seems to have escaped wholly by the posts, many of which were splintered and several of them entirely demolished. Westwardly, the posts were left uninjured, the charge keeping the wires to their termination at a telegraph station at the City Gas Works, in the First Ward, nearly four thousand feet distant, destroying some of the instruments and stopping the clock at the precise moment of the occurrence of the phenomenon.

The Society was then adjourned.

---

*Stated Meeting, October 5, 1860.*

Present, nine members.

Judge SHARSWOOD, Vice-President, in the Chair.

A letter from the State Historical Society of Wisconsin was read, transmitting donations for the library.

The following donations for the Library were received:—

Cat. State Lib. Wisconsin. H. Rublee. Madison, 1860. Pamph.  
8vo.—*From the Society.*

- Cat. of Autographs. J. G. Bell, Manchester, Eng. 1860. P. 8vo.
- Special-Karte des . . . . Wisconsin, &c., G. Richter. Wisel, 1849. 8vo.
- Geol. Ann. Reps. for 1855'8. Percival, Hall, Daniels. 3 pamph. 8vo.
- Wisconsin State Hist. Soc. Reports and Collections, IV, V. 8vo.
- Wisconsin Ann. Messages of Gov. A. W. Randall, for 1858'9. 8vo.
- Jahresbericht des Gen. Adj. Wisconsin Militz. 1855. Pamph. 8vo.
- Jaarlijksch Rapport van den Staats Opziener, &c. 1855. Pamph. 8vo.
- Raport fra Undersogelses-Committeen, &c. 1859. Pamph. 8vo.
- Laws of Wisconsin . . . . Organization and Government of Towns.  
E. M. Haines. Chicago, 1858. Pamph. 8vo.
- An. Report of Commerce, Manuf., Pub. Imp., and R.R. System of  
Milwaukee for 1855'6'9. Pamph. 8vo.
- School Code of Wisconsin. 1859. Pamph. 8vo.
- An. Rep. (11th) on the Com. Schools of Wisconsin, by L. C. Draper.  
1859. Pamph. 8vo.
- Proceedings of the Board of Regents of Normal Schools, 1st Meet-  
ing. Madison, 1857. Pamph. 8vo.
- An. Rep. (12th) of B. of R. of Univ. of Wise. for 1859. Pam. 8vo.
- Rep. of Trus., &c. W. S. Hosp. for the Insane. 1859. Pamp. 8vo.
- Wiscon. Senate Jour., 1858'9; App. 1857'8. 6 vols. Madison. 8vo.
- Wisconsin Assem. Jour., 1857'8; Appendix, 1857'8. 5 vols.
- Wisconsin Laws for 1857'8'9; Private Laws, 1858'9. 5 vols.
- Wisconsin Revised Statutes. Chicago, 1858. 8vo.
- Wisconsin S. Agri. Soc. Trans., V. Madison, 1860. 8vo.
- Ollendorff's Neue Methode . . . zur Erlernung der Russ. sprache; mit  
Schüssel. M. Joel. 2 vols. Frankfurt a M. 1854. 8vo.—  
*From Prof. Röhrig, of Philadelphia.*
- Logique de Hegel, traduit pour le premier fois, en accompagnée  
d'une introduction et d'une commentaire perpétuel, par A. Véra.  
2 vols. Paris, 1859. 8vo.—*From Prof. Röhrig.*
- Connecticut State Agricultural Society Transactions. 1859. Hart-  
ford, 1860. 8vo.—*From the Soc.*
- St. Louis A. Sci. Trans. Vol. I, No. 4. 1860. 8vo.—*From the Ac.*
- Canada Geological Survey, Report of Progress for 1859. Montreal.  
8vo.—*From Sir W. Logan.*
- Lon. Chem. S. Quar. Jour. No. L. 1860. 8vo.—*From the Soc.*
- Evangelical Repos. June to Sept., 1860. Phila.—*From Mr. Young.*
- Cambridge Astronomical Journal. No. cxl.—*From the Ed.*
- Amer. Jour. Med. Sci. No. lxxx.—*From the Publishers.*
- Med. News and Library. No. cexiv.—*From the Pub.*

The following obituary notice of Judge Joel Jones, late member of the Society, was read by Judge Sharswood:—

The subject of this obituary notice was born the 22d October, 1796, in Coventry, Connecticut. On his father's side he was a lineal descendant of Col. John Jones, who married Henrietta, the second sister of Oliver Cromwell, and was one of the Judges who sat on the trial of Charles the First. Colonel Jones was one of Cromwell's House of Lords in 1653, and Lord Lieutenant of Ireland from 1650 to 1659. He was tried and beheaded for high treason October 17, 1660. His son, William Jones, was for several years Deputy Governor of New Haven and Connecticut. From him Joel Jones was the fourth in descent.

Joel entered Yale College in 1813, and graduated in 1817. He was, during this time, between the ages of seventeen and twenty-one, and was able to support himself by teaching school. The necessity he was under of doing this was, no doubt, a great advantage to him, as it has been to so many others. Nothing makes so accurate a scholar, or lays a more thorough foundation in the classics, while the habits of close attention and patience which are cultivated are of the utmost importance. Mr. Jones graduated with the highest honors of his class. He studied law with Judge Bristol, of New Haven, and afterwards in the Litchfield Law School, under the care of Judges Reeves and Gould. Upon the completion of his studies, his parents removed to Wilkesbarre, in this State. Joel accompanied them, and was admitted to practise law in Luzerne. He did not open an office there nor until he determined to settle in Easton. Here he occupied himself laboriously in law studies, and distinguished himself in some cases which required much research into forgotten if not obsolete law. He was counsel in the case of *Barnet v. Thrie*, in which the old remedy of assize of nuisance was revived; and his argument for the plaintiff in error in the Supreme Court (17 S. & R. 187) is at once a testimony to his learning and industry. In 1830, the Legislature passed resolutions for the appointment by the Governor of "three competent persons, learned in the laws of this Commonwealth, as commissioners to revise, collate, and digest all such public acts and statutes of the Civil Code of this State, and all such British statutes in force in this State, as are general and permanent in their nature." Governor Wolf, who, having been a member of the bar of Northampton County, and associated with Mr. Jones, was well acquainted with his capacity, appointed him, with

the late William Rawle, Sr., and Thomas I. Wharton, to perform this highly important work. The commissioners were employed upon it for five years; but it was suffered to expire before it was completed. They reported annually to the Legislature, and many of their bills were adopted, though some of the most important were never acted upon. It is undoubtedly a useful and even necessary work, from time to time, to revise and digest the statute laws. Whatever opinion may be entertained upon the subject of codification generally, this much will be yielded. Acts of Assembly are often hastily penned by men who have no accurate knowledge of what the law was before, or even if well drawn they are often attended in the course of their passage by sudden amendments, hastily proposed and adopted. In making such revision, however, two things ought carefully to be observed,—that there should be no such change of language as would imply a change of the law, without a distinct report that such was the intention. The second is, that all the acts thus revised should be expressly repealed by their titles. The commissioners were not as careful as they might have been in these respects. It was perhaps their intention, at the close of their labors, to have reported a list of all the acts to be repealed, but it was never reached; and the consequence is, that, under the general clause repealing all such statutes or parts of statutes as were supplied by the Revised Code, the old statutes must still be referred to and studied to see if all their provisions have been supplied; and it is often an embarrassing question to determine how far they have been. As to the first point, the neglect of it has rendered it necessary for the Supreme Court to adopt a new canon of interpretation for the Revised Code specially; and the same thing has been done in New York. In other respects, though very slow in their labors, the commissioners evinced great learning and a sound conservative spirit in desiring rather to adapt the plastic character of our common-law forms of procedure to the objects of chancery jurisdiction, without creating separate courts of equity or vesting the judges of the common-law courts with unusual powers without the intervention of a jury. The opinion is a very common one at the bar, that it would have been better that our old familiar system of law and equity, alike administered by court and jury, which grew up among us by custom,—the silent legislation of the people,—had been continued and extended, rather than the present hybrid system introduced—law and equity on one side of the court, and equity exclusively on the other—in which the orator for equity grounds his bill for relief upon what

may be true in England or other States, but is a downright falsehood here, that he has no remedy or an inadequate one at law.

About the period when his labors as commissioner came to an end, —in 1835,—he was appointed by Governor Wolf one of the Judges of the District Court for the City and County of Philadelphia. He held this place for ten years, when, upon the renewal of the court in 1845, Judge Thomas M. Pettit having declined a reappointment as President of the Court, Judge Jones succeeded to his place. He continued to act as president for three years, when he resigned upon his election as President of the Girard College for Orphans. As a judge he was remarkable for great courtesy, immovable patience, and unwearied attention. He was therefore a safe though, it must be confessed, a slow judge. When he had once formed and expressed an opinion at *Nisi Prius*, which was after great deliberation, he was hardly ever known to change it. His law learning was very considerable, but it lay more among the ancient than the modern books; and it was with much difficulty that he could turn the current of his ideas upon legal subjects into new channels. Hence his decisions often seemed grounded upon mere technicalities, yet while it was certainly only the justice of the law which he aimed to administer, as every judge ought, yet it was evidently his great desire *summum cuique tribuere* whenever it could lawfully be done. He occupied the post of President of Girard College only eighteen months. His views and those of the Board of Directors not according on certain points connected with the institution, he resigned his post, and in the succeeding autumn was elected Mayor of Philadelphia, which place he filled for one year.

After this he returned to the bar in this city, at which he continued till his death, which took place February 3d, 1860, in the sixty-fourth year of his age. He always was and continued a hard student. After his return to the bar, he revised and enlarged Bouvier's Law Dictionary, and published a small volume entitled, "A Syllabus of the Law of Land Office Titles in Pennsylvania." He contributed to the American Law Register, and wrote a series of articles on American jurisprudence and the moulding of common-law forms to equitable doctrines, for several English law periodicals. He was an excellent Hebrew and Greek scholar, and an earnest student of the Bible in the original tongues. He published a volume entitled, "The Patriarchal Age, or the Story of Joseph," in which much critical acuteness as well as extensive Oriental erudition was exhibited. It has received high commendations from the



most eminent biblical scholars. He contributed largely to the religious periodicals on various topics, and for some time edited a religious magazine called "The Literalist." The title of the magazine indicated what was the fact, that he was a firm believer in the literal fulfilment of Scripture prophecy; and a large part of his time appears to have been devoted to the illustration and defence of this opinion. He left many manuscripts, some of which,—notes and comments on parts of the Bible,—are soon to be published.

He was truly exemplary in all the relations of life, a sincere Christian, and a good man. Kind in his disposition, yielding in his temper, affable in his manner, unbending in his integrity, and pure in his life; his memory, as that of the just, is blessed.

GEO. SHARSWOOD.

September 21st, 1860.

The decease of Andrea Mustoxidi, of Corfu, at Vienna, July 29, 1860, was announced by Professor Trego.

The subject of human remains in the Diluvial Formation, brought forward at the last meeting, was discussed.

And the Society was adjourned.

---

*Stated Meeting October 19, 1860.*

Dr. F. BACHE in the Chair.

Present, five members.

Letters were read from the Batavian Society, dated Rotterdam, January 12th; from P. A. T. Peters, dated Altona, April 16th; and from the University of Toronto, dated October 11th, 1860, acknowledging the receipt of the Transactions and Proceedings.

The following donations for the Library were received:—

Journal of the Franklin Institute Philada., for Oct.—*From the Inst.*  
 African Repository, for October, Washington.—*From A. Colon. S.*  
 Minutes of the 151st An. Meeting of the General Association of  
 Connecticut. New Haven, 1860. 8vo. Pamph. 86 pp.